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# COMIC SHOP NEWS™

# Mission Impossible

What would you do if you came face to face with a mysterious man who strongly hints that he may be an angel. And what if that mystery man told you that you about to be charged with a mission to kill someone. And what if that same mystery man told you that the completion of this mission could tip the scales in the war between good and evil?

What would you do? Hard to say—but *Jon Hoeber & Erich Hoeber* reveal what the average guy might do in ***The Mission,*** their new Image limited series.

"Jon and Erich have written the perfect supernatural thriller," co-producer *Mar Guggenheim* said. "People have questioned the existence of God and angels for millennia, but the main character of ***The Mission*** has to face the reality of this conundrum, and the twists and turns will have the readers guessing as well. Werther's art is a flawless companion to the story, putting into pictures the discord our hero confronts."

"Our hero, Paul, is a regular guy who's approached by a mysterious figure, Gabriel, who bluntly tells him that there's a secret war going on between Good and Evil and he's been chosen to play a part," *Erich Hoeber* explained. "Gabe gives him a *mission*, instructing Paul to kill someone. Of course, Paul assumes this guy's a crackpot... but he soon realizes that something supernatural *may* in fact be going on, that Gabriel *may* in fact be the Archangel Gabriel, and that if he doesn't do what he says, he *may* in fact die.

"Paul's horrified. He's trapped. Even if Gabe is telling the truth, Paul's no killer. And even if there is a war between good and evil, why does his target deserve to die? What sort of angel tells you to kill someone anyway? And the deeper Paul gets involved, the thornier these questions get."

The protagonist of ***The Mission*** is named Paul; was there any particular significance to the name choice (or was it just that Ringo didn't sound as serious?).

"The name was inspired by Paul the Apostle," *Jon Hoeber* said, "who had a dramatic conversion on the road to Damascus."

"Also, my dog's name is Ringo, so that really seemed like the wrong choice," Erich added with a laugh.

What was the inspiration for ***The Mission,*** and why did it become a comic book series rather than a film project? "We've always been captivated by stories of people under extreme pressure," Jon said. "***The Mission*** is very brutal in the physical and psychological toll it takes on our hero. Doing it as a comic gave us the freedom to go to some really dark places without anyone looking over our shoulders, telling us to keep things PG-13.

YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO THROW ME TO THE GROUND FOR MORE THAN ANYONE. YOU DON'T EVER THROW AN HOMELESS GUY WITH A PENCIL OF MINE.
AND YOU AWAY FROM THE HOMELESS GUY WITH A PENCIL OF MINE.
SHEEZ!
ARRGH! CRAZY PEOPLE.

"We'd been wanting to get into comics for years but hadn't really known the ins and outs of that world, so when *Marc Guggenheim* and *Alisa Tager* offered us the opportunity, we jumped at it."

***The Mission,*** an Image Comics miniseries, is produced through Guggenheim's Collider Entertainment. Since the term "producer" is rarely used in comics, exactly what does the job entail? "In this case, it's very similar to acting as a producer on a movie," Guggenheim said. "My producing partner, *Alisa Tager*, and I serve as a creative springboard for Erich and Jon and provide the usual feedback and input that movie producers do with screenplays. Initially, I thought I'd have to help Jon and Erich make the transition to comics in terms of helping them with the storytelling, but they cottoned to it *really* fast."

Of course, this isn't Guggenheim's first involvement with the story of a man on a divine mission—his all-too-short-lived series ***Eli Stone*** dealt with similar themes. How does ***The Mission*** compare to that series? "I love this question," Guggenheim said. "I often joke that ***The Mission*** is the HBO version of ***Eli Stone***, which was produced for Disney-owned ABC. It certainly deals with the same questions—is this guy touched by divinity or just losing his mind?—but in a much, *much* darker way. And with ***Eli***, there was singing!"

Somewhere between the Old Testament and the New Testament, the concept of men given a mission by God (or a chosen representative) fell out of favor. For the most part, if a man undertakes a mission today that he says is divinely inspired or instructed, people assume that he's insane and/or delusional. What changed, and why is a society that ostensibly values faith so unwilling to believe in its physical manifestation in this regard? "It turns out that it's pretty easy to have a 'relationship' with God when he isn't personally showing up, asking you to do things," *Erich Hoeber* replied. "What astonishes me isn't that many people have doubts about God as a physical actor in our daily lives, but that many people have no doubts at all.! Go anywhere in the world and you'll see people doing morally questionable things in God's name. Without trying to say what the truth is, we're trying to ask the questions, '"How do we know what we know? How can we tell right from wrong? Truth from lies? Sanity from madness?"' There seems to be a pop-cultural interest in the concept of divine guidance and/or intervention; ***Supernatural*** has had six strong seasons exploring that concept, for example. Why do you suppose that is? "Well, it's obviously a great jumping off point for human drama because it's inherently ambiguous and yet there's often so much at stake for the characters," Jon said. "We love that, but our approach is to turn the genre on it's head and make the divine intervention the antagonist even more than the mission itself."

CRACK
THIS JESUS FREAKSHOW IS FOR YOU!
OOOF!
WHUMP
IS THIS WHAT YOU WANTED? IS THIS WHAT IT TAKES?
UNGH!
ALRIGHT YOU LUNATIC, I'LL DO WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU! IS THIS YOUR THING?

With a name like Gabriel, most will assume that the man who gives Paul his mission has to a figure of divine goodness—but is there a dark side to Gabriel as well? Is an angel capable of misleading, deceiving, or misinforming in order to carry out his mission? That is, can even angels believe that the end can justify the means? "Those questions are at the heart of this story," Erich said. "We deliberately made Gabriel a shady character. The way *Werther [Dell'Edera,* artist of ***The Mission***] draws him, he looks more like a hit-man than an angel! He's cold, brutal, and abusive. This gives Paul as much reason to doubt what Gabe is saying as to believe it. Which is why we've tried to structure this series less like a supernatural thriller and more like a spy thriller. You've got a mission, but you never know the full story. The information you get is suspect. The motives of your handler are suspect. And even the supernatural elements themselves are implied rather than seen. Eventually Paul is going to start wondering if this is *really* happening, or if he's losing his mind.. And he's going to start to question everything he's been told. What if he's not actually working for an angel? What if he's working for the other side?"

Is there any way for someone to convince a rational member of modern society that he was being given tasked with a divine mission? How would the average person respond to such a claim? "We're all professional skeptics these days, right? If someone tells me they're on a mission from God, I ask them if they've taken their meds today," Jon said. "Which is why Paul is completely alone. Most people are brought into a community by their faith. It gives them strength. But for Paul, it's utterly isolating. If his wife finds out he just killed a man, she'll leave him. If the police find out, he'll go to prison. 'God told me to do it' isn't going to cut it."

Over the years, television has also had a fascination with an average person given a divine mission—but in most cases, the protagonist is on a mission to help an individual, a family, or a small group. ***Joan of Arcadia*** was divinely guided to help troubled individuals, but she rarely undertook a task that had larger ramifications. ***Touched by an Angel*** dealt with the concept of heavenly intervention and divine guidance. And of course, ***Eli Stone*** explored the same themes, albeit on a smaller, more individual scale (at least initially). Just how big *is* Paul's mission, and how far-reaching are its ultimate ramifications? "Jeez! I'm not going to tell you that! I want everyone to buy the books!" Erich joked.

Just how long will Paul's mission last? "We've written a six-issue series which is complete in and of itself," Erich said. "We're taking a few months off from comics to write another film—which is actually what pays the bills around here. But we've had such a great experience doing this series, I think there's a good chance we'll revisit it soon."

***The Mission #s 1 & 2*** (written by *Jon & Erich Hoeber* and illustrated by *Werther Dell'Edera)* are already available in comic shops; the third issue is slated for late April release, with subsequent issues appearing on a monthly schedule throughout the summer.

**by Cliff Biggers**

*Courtesy your friendly neighborhood comics outlet!*

# COMIC SHOP NEWSARAMA

**Produced by *Comic Shop News* in cooperation with *newsarama.com***

## Absolute-ly Great News!

If you have all four volumes of ***The Absolute Sandman*** and ***Absolute Death,*** you may have thought your collection was complete. Well, it *was*—and it still will be, if you add ***The Absolute Sandman Book Five*** to your library this fall!

While every issue of the original ***Sandman*** run was collected in the first four ***Absolute Sandman*** books, this fifth volume assembles ***The Sandman: Endless Nights,*** a collection of *Neil Gaiman*-written stories illustrated by such talents as *P. Craig Russell, Milo Manara, Frank Quitely, Miguelanxo Prado, Bill Sienkiewicz, Glenn Fabry,* and *Barron Storey*; ***The Sandman: The Dream Hunters,*** the *Neil Gaiman* novella illustrated by Japanese superstar artist *Yoshitaka Amano,* as well a the 2009 comic adaptation by *P. Craig Russell*; and ***Sandman Midnight Theatre,*** the frequently-overlooked crossover that brings the Sandman and the Golden Age Sandman together, courtesy of *Neil Gaiman, Matt Wagner, & Teddy Kristiansen.*

The oversized slipcased hardcover is slated for November release, just in time for holiday season gift-giving.

## Coming Comics—DC in June

"Reign of Doomsday" continues in *Paul Cornell & Kenneth Rocafort's* ***Action Comics #902.*** Even with Steel, Superboy, Supergirl and the Eradicator by his side, Superman is still in for the fight of his life – and considering his life, you know that's gotta be some fight!

The Red Hood is out! But the bigger mystery is who broke him out of prison – and

why? His liberators seem to have plans for him... plans that Jason wants no part of. You'll find out just what those plans are in ***Batman & Robin #24*** by *Judd Winick & Guillem March.*

When Waynetech's launch of Interworld is plagued by a series of "virtual murders," Batman teams up with Oracle to hunt down the culprit in a simulated environment that's slowly collapsing into post-apocalyptic zombie-haunted chaos. A computer-generated Batman adventure that brings Dark Knight justice to a wild new frontier, to face a new and virulent menace, in *Grant Morrison's* ***Batman Incorporated #8,*** illustrated by *Scott Clark.*

*David Finch* continues to explore the darker corners of Gotham City in ***Batman: The Dark Knight #5,*** the penultimate chapter of "Golden Dawn."

Things get ugly as The Birds of Prey are trapped in a cunning puzzle box of a skyscraper in *Gail Simone & Jesus Saiz's* ***Birds of Prey #13,*** pursued by a nightmarish killer who holds all the cards, leaving only the Huntress, the reluctant aide of Renee Montoya, and The Question to free them! And what effect does the death of Oracle have on the team as they race to escape from hell?

***Brightest Day*** may come to an end in May, but its aftereffects continue into June with the kickoff of ***Brightest Day Aftermath: The Search,*** a three-issue limited series by *Jonathan Vankin & Marco Castiello.* The new protector of Earth has been chosen... but one reluctant hero making his return to the DCU is trying to convince Batman, Superman and the others heroes of the DC Universe that this may not be a good thing, because he can see that things are not right and mankind's brightest days are indeed over.

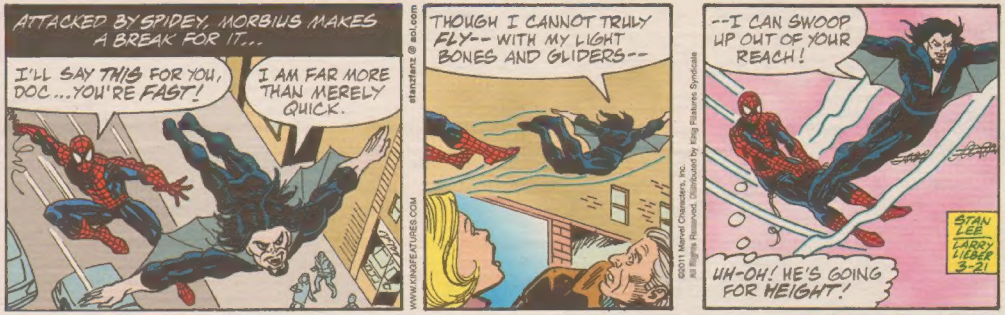
Coping with his failure to save Metropolis and the loss of Lois and the Daily Planet, Superman makes a tactical mistake that could cost the JLA dearly in ***DC Universe Online Legends #9.*** Then, in ***DCUOL #10,*** Lex Luthor has saved the day and done what Superman couldn't by rescuing the Daily Planet and foiling Brainiac's plans. Now, Superman must answer to the JLA for his dereliction of duty... and it won't be pretty!

In *Geoff Johns, Andy Kubert, & Sandra Hope's* ***Flashpoint #2,*** Barry Allen sets out on a mission to discover what happened to the world's greatest heroes or die trying—and that may be his fate as he tries to make lightning strike twice. Meanwhile, in *Dan Jurgens & Norm Rapmund's* ***Booster Gold #45,*** Booster is aware that the ***Flashpoint*** world isn't his own, but he's not quite sure how to make things right.

***Flashpoint*** continues in fifteen miniseries premieres and four oneshots, including:

- ***Flashpoint: Abin Sur—The Green Lantern.*** "He survived the crash!" Creative team: *Adam Schlagman,* writer; *Felipe Massafera,* artist; *Felipe Massafera,* cover artist.
- ***Flashpoint: Batman, Knight of Vengeance.*** "The Knight of Vengeance." Creative team: *Brian Azzarello,* writer. *Eduardo Risso,* artist. *Dave Johnson,* cover artist. (Yes, it's the ***100 Bullets*** team reunited!)
- ***Flashpoint: Citizen Cold.*** "He loves someone he shouldn't." Creative team: *Scott Kolins,* writer, artist, and cover artist.
- ***Flashpoint: Deadman & the Flying Graysons.*** "For their last performance—an escape act!" Creative team: *J.T. Krul,* writer;

## SPIDER-MAN BY STAN LEE & LARRY LIEBER


ATTACKED BY SPIDEY, MORBIUS MAKES A BREAK FOR IT...
I'LL SAY THIS FOR YOU, DOC ...YOU'RE FAST!
I AM FAR MORE THAN MERELY QUICK.
THOUGH I CANNOT TRULY FLY-- WITH MY LIGHT BONES AND GLIDERS--
--I CAN SWOOP UP OUT OF YOUR REACH!
UH-OH! HE'S GOING FOR HEIGHT!
STAN LEE LARRY LIEBER 3-21
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*Mikel Janin*, artist; *Cliff Chiang*, cover artist.

•***Flashpoint: Deathstroke & the Curse of the Ravager.*** "He will stop at nothing to find his lost treasure!" Creative team: *Jimmy Palmiotti*, writer; *Joe Bennett & John Dell*, artists and cover artists.

•***Flashpoint: Emperor Aquaman*** - "He will drown the world... *then rule it!*" Creative team: *Tony Bedard*, writer; *Ardian Syaf & Vicente Sifuentes*, artists and cover artists.

•***Flashpoint: Frankenstein & the Creatures of the Unknown #1.*** "They can't survive unless they find their maker!" Creative team: *Jeff Lemire*, writer; *Ibraim Roberson*, artist; *Doug Mahnke*, cover artist.

•***Flashpoint: Hal Jordan*** - "He never got the ring." Creative Team: *Adam Schlagman*, writer. *Ben Oliver*, artist. *Rags Morales*, cover artist.

•***Flashpoint: Kid Flash Lost Starring Bart Allen*** - "Where is he? Or should we say *when?*" Creative team: *Sterling Gates*, writer; *Oliver Nome*, artist; *Francis Manapul*, cover artist.

•***Flashpoint: Legion of Doom Starring Heatwave*** - "Whatever happened to the world's greatest super-villains?" Creative team: *Adam Glass*, writer; *Rodney Buchemi & Jose Marzan*, artists; *Miguel Sepulveda*, cover artist.

•***Flashpoint: Lois Lane and the Resistance*** - "She is ready to reveal the Amazons' secret!" Creative team - *Dan Abnett & Andy Lanning*, writers; *Eddy Nunez*, artist; *Eddy Nunes & Sandra Hope*, cover artists.

•***Flashpoint: The Outsider.*** "He won't join the war! (It could dirty his new suit.)" Creative team: *James Robinson*, writer; *Javi Fernandez*, artist; *Kevin Nowlan*, cover artist.

•***Flashpoint: Project Superman*** - "They experimented on him in a lab for years!" Creative team: *Scott Snyder & Lowell Francis*, writers; *Gene Ha*, art & cover artist.

•***Flashpoint: Secret Seven.*** "One among them will betray them all!" Creative team: *Peter Milligan*, writer; *George Pérez & Scott Koblish*, artists; *George Pérez*, cover artist.

•***Flashpoint: Wonder Woman & the Furies*** - "If she can't save the world—no one will!" Creative team: *Dan Abnett & Andy Lanning*, writers; *Scott Clark & David Beaty*, artists; *Ed Benes*, cover artist.

•***Flashpoint: World of Flashpoint.*** "Discover the world of ***Flashpoint.***" Creative team: *Rex Ogle*, writer; *Paulo Siquiera*, artist. *Shane Davis*, cover artist.

And just how far-reaching will the ramifications of ***Flashpoint*** and its altered timeline be? "The fun part of ***Flashpoint*** is that it leads to this level of wild speculation" regarding changes to the DCU that will carry on after the series ends, executive editor *Eddie Berganza* said. "All I would say right now is that the speculation hasn't been *wild enough!* The last thing anyone should do is to hold back their imagination."

In addition, DC has revealed the titles and talent rosters for a quartet of ***Flashpoint*** related oneshots, also slated for June release. Those titles include:

•***Flashpoint: The Canterbury Cricket.*** "His power is his curse!" Creative team: *Mike Carlin*, writer; *Rags Morales*, artist & cover artist.

•***Flashpoint: Green Arrow Industries.*** "He makes money from war!" Creative team: *Pomsak Pichetshote*, writer; *Mark Castiello*, artist; *Viktor Kalvachev*, cover artist.

•***Flashpoint: Grodd of War.*** "Africa belongs to him!" Creative team: *Sean Ryan*, writer; *Ig Guara*, artist; *Francis Manapul*, cover artist.

•***Flashpoint: Reverse Flash.*** "He's more powerful than ever!" Creative team: *Scott Kolins*, writer; *Joel Gomez*, artist; *Ardian Syaf & Vicente Cifuentes*, cover artists.

"War of the Green Lanterns" comes to a shocking conclusion in ***Green Lantern #67*** by *Geoff Johns, Doug Mahnke, & Christian Alamy*. Just how does Krona's rampage affect the Green Lantern Corps? Well, DC tells us that it will change *everything!...*

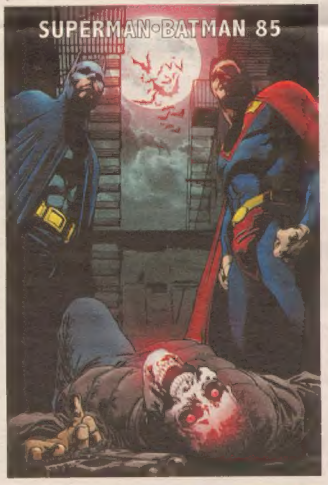
And while the war may be over, the aftermath continues in ***Green Lantern Corps #61*** by *Tony Bedard, Tyler Kirkham, & Matt Banning* and ***Green Lantern: Emerald Warriors #11*** by *Peter Tomasi, Fernando Pasarin, & Cam Smith*. In the former, John Stewart and Kyle Rayner try to put their world back together; in the latter, Guy Gardner & Kilowog discovered that their post-"War" story has only just begun!

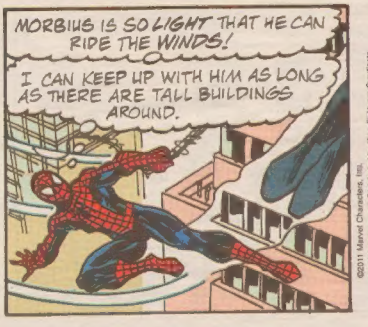
Eclipso faces off against Donna Troy in ***Justice League of America #58*** by *James Robinson, Brett Booth, & Norm Rapmund*—and DC promises that the ending is a shocker!

The JSA's many members each take a turn in the spotlight in ***JSA 80-Page Giant 2011 #1,*** which includes seven stories from such talents as *Ivan Brandon, Matt Kindt, Nic Klein, Steve Niles*, and others.

DC pays homage to the late *Dwayne McDuffie* and the world of Milestone Media with ***Static Shock Special #1,*** featuring tribute material from Milestone co-founder *Denys Cowan* and other Milestone alumni.

Witness Dick Grayson's first adventure with Superman as Batman in ***Superman/Batman #85*** by *Judd Winick & Travel Foreman*, a tale that pits The Dark Knight and The Man of Steel against the





MORBIUS IS SO LIGHT THAT HE CAN RIDE THE WINDS!
I CAN KEEP UP WITH HIM AS LONG AS THERE ARE TALL BUILDINGS AROUND.
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monstrous villain Sabbac, a Kryptonian serial killer and an army of demon children!

The year-long "Odyssey" storyline comes to an earth-shattering conclusion in ***Wonder Woman #612*** by *J. Michael Straczynski, Phil Hester, Don Kramer, & Wayne Faucher.* Can Diana defeat the powerful forces that destroyed her entire reality? And even if she wins, she could still lose everything!

DC collected editions (solicited for June, July, and August release) include:

- ***Astro City: Life in the Big City New Edition HC & TP,*** featuring new cover art by *Alex Ross.*
- ***Blackest Night TP,*** collecting ***Blackest Night #s 0-8.***
- ***Blackest Night: Green Lantern TP,*** collecting ***Green Lantern #s 43-52.***
- ***Blackest Night: Green Lantern Corps TP,*** collecting ***Green Lantern Corps #s 39-47.***
- ***Blackest Night: Rise of the Black Lanterns TP,*** collecting the "resurrected" issues of seven classic DC series, along with ***Green Arrow #30*** and ***Adventure Comics #7.***
- ***Blackest Night: Tales of the Corps TP,*** collecting ***Tales of the Corps #s 1-3, Green Lantern #49,*** and ***Adventure Comics #s 4 & 5.***
- ***Blackest Night: Black Lantern Corps Volume 1 TP,*** collecting the ***Superman, Batman,*** and ***Teen Titans Blackest Night*** miniseries.
- ***Blackest Night: Black Lantern Corps Volume 2 TP,*** collecting the ***Flash, Wonder Woman,*** and ***JSA Blackest Night*** miniseries.
- ***DC Comics Presents Superman—Infestation #1,*** collecting material from ***Action #778, Man of Steel #113, Adventures of Superman #113,*** and ***Superman #169.***
- ***DC Comics Presents Impulse #1,*** collecting ***Impulse #s 50-53.***
- ***DC Comics Presents Justice League of America—Black Baptism #1,*** collecting the 2001 miniseries.
- ***DC Universe: Legacies HC,*** collecting the ten-part series.
- ***Firestorm: The Nuclear Man TP,*** collecting the 1970's ***Firestorm #s 1-5*** and stories from ***Flash s 289-293.***
- ***Gotham Central Volume 2: Jokers & Madmen TP,*** collecting ***Gotham Central #s 11-22.***
- ***Gotham City Sirens: Strange Fruit HC,*** collecting ***Gotham City Sirens #s 14-20.***
- ***Green Lantern: Emerald Warriors Volume 1 HC,*** collecting the first seven issues of the newest ***Green Lantern*** series.
- ***Legion of Super-Heroes: The Curse Deluxe Edition HC,*** collecting *Paul Levitz-Keith Giffen* tales from ***Legion of Super-Heroes #s 297-313 & Annual #s 2-3.***
- ***The New Teen Titans Omnibus Volume 1 HC,*** collecting ***DC Comics Presents #26*** and ***The New Teen Titans #s 1-16.***
- ***Outsiders: The Great Divide TP,*** collecting ***Outsiders #s 32-37.***
- ***Showcase Presents The Trial of the Flash TP,*** collecting ***The Flash #s 323-327, 329-336, & 340-350.***
- ***The Secret Society of Super-Villains HC,*** collecting stories from ***Secret Society of Super-Villains #s 1-5, DC Special #27, DC Special Series #6, Super-Team Family #s 13 & 14, Justice League of America #s 166-168, Cancelled Comics Cavalcade #2,*** and ***The Amazing World of DC Comics #11.***
- ***The Steve Ditko Omnibus Volume 1 Starring Shade the Changing Man HC,*** collecting 464 pages of Ditko material, including ***Shade #s 1-8, Stalker #s 1-4,*** and much more.
- ***Superman: Grounded Volume 1 HC,*** collecting ***Superman #s 700-706.***
- ***Welcome to Tranquility: One Foot in the Grave TP,*** collecting the six-issue miniseries.
- ***X-Files/30 Days of Night TP,*** collecting the six-issue crossover tale by *Steve Niles, Adam Jones, & Tom Mandrake.*

## Coming Comics—Vertigo/DC in June

*Scott Snyder & Sean Murphy* present a WWII tale of vampires and vampire hunters in ***American Vampire: Survival of the Fittest #1,*** the kickoff issue of a five-part series. It's World War II in Nazi-occupied Romania as vampire hunters Felicia Book and Cash McCogan go behind enemy lines with the secret organization known as the Vassals of the Morningstar in search of a rumored vampire cure. But their haunted, twisted past with Skinner Sweet makes the mission more difficult than they imagined.

*Max Allan Collins & Terry Beatty* present a new chapter in the acclaimed Perdition saga (the graphic novel series that inspired the Academy Award-winning ***Road to Perdition***) in ***Return to Perdition HC.*** The setting is America in the early 1970s, and our third generation hero, Michael Satariano, Jr. is a Vietnam vet recently returned to the States. He doesn't know that his father's real name was Michael O'Sullivan, and is unaware of the conflict between his dad, his grandfather and John Looney – the criminal godfather of Rock Island, Illinois. But when he's recruited by the mob as a hitman, he's going to learn the hard way that you can never outrun (or outgun) your past. (Advance solicited for August release.) And at the same time, Vertigo is offering new editions of ***Road to Perdition TP*** and ***Road to Perdition 2: On the Road TP.***

*Jason Aaron* teams up with several guest artists, including *Dean Haspiel, Denys Cowan, Igor Kordey, Jill Thompson, & Timothy Truman,* for the landmark ***Scalped #50.*** This issue features two special stories, one detailing the long bloody history of scalping and scalphunters and the other spotlighting the founding of the Prairie Rose rez as seen through the eyes of Dash Bad Horse's ancestor, His Many Bad Horses.

Vertigo collected editions include:

- ***The Absolute Sandman Book Five HC,*** collecting previously-uncollected ***Sandman*** graphic novels and crossover project. (See the story elsewhere in this issue of *CSN* for more info.)
- ***Fables Deluxe Edition Volume 3 HC,*** collecting ***Fables #s 19-27.***
- ***Jack of Fables Volume 9: The End TP,*** collecting ***Jack of Fables #s 46-50.***
- ***Northlanders Volume 5: Metal TP,*** collecting ***Northlanders #s 29-36.***
- ***Hellblazer: Bloody Carnations TP,*** collecting ***Hellblazer #s 267-275.***
- ***Revolver TP,*** a softcover edition of the acclaimed graphic novel by *Matt Kindt.*
- ***Vertigo Resurrected: The Sandman Presents Petrefax #1,*** collecting the four-part miniseries by *Mike Carey & Steve Leialoha.*

## Coming from DC Direct

***Flashpoint*** makes the jump into the third dimension in DC Direct's ***Flashpoint Series 1 Action Figures,*** featuring 6.75" tall figures of ***Cyborg, The Flash, Wonder Woman,*** and ***Batman*** as they appear in ***Flashpoint.*** (July)

Koriand'r is the statuesque subject of ***Cover Girls of the DC Universe Starfire Statue,*** designed by *Adam Hughes.* (Nov)

***Blackest Night*** continues in mini-bust form with the ***Heroes of the DC Universe: Blackest Night—Sinestro Corps Member Arkillo Bust,*** based on the art of *Patrick Gleason.*(Nov)

The ***Blackest Night Power Battery*** series continues with the ***Blackest Night: Yellow Lantern 1:$ Scale Power Battery & Ring Prop Replica Set.*** The Yellow Lantern 1:4 Scale Power Battery and the Yellow Power Ring sit in a translucent display and are removable from the stand. Both light up, featuring manual on/off switches. (Nov)

The bargain-priced ***Blackest Night Action Figure Box Set*** features ***Indigo Munnk, Green Lantern Hal Jordan, Black Lantern Blue Beetle*** and ***Star Sapphire Fatality,*** as well as a 48-page book entitled ***Blackest Night Special Edition #1,*** which includes ***Green Lantern #s 40 & 41*** and ***Booster Gold #27.*** (Nov)

***Green Lantern Action Figures Series 4*** includes 6.75" figures of ***Green Lantern Arkkis Chummuk, Green Lantern Hal Jordan (Power Glow), Red Lantern Guy Gardner,*** and ***Green Lantern Stel.*** (Nov)

DC Direct is rescheduling the ***Batman: Vampire Mini-Statue Based on Designs by Kelley Jones,*** depicting the vampiric Dark Knight as presented in the Elseworlds Batman "Vampire Trilogy." Look for it in October.

The ***Batman: Black & White Statue: Batman Arkham Asylum*** depicts an original sculpt based on the videogame design of the Dark Knight. This statue was developed using actual character designs from the best-selling game ***Batman: Arkham Asylum.*** (Nov)

NO WAY I CAN CATCH UP WITH MORBIUS NOW.
FWIPP
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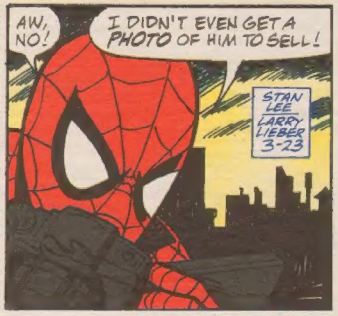


The Mistress of Magic is the latest addition to DC Direct's ***Women of the DC Universe Series 3 Bust. Zatanna*** is designed by Amanda Conner and sculpted by *Jim Maddox; ti ssim t'nod*! (Nov)

The *Jim Lee*-based ***DC Universe Online Statue*** series continues with a pair of new releases: ***Harley Quinn*** and ***The Joker.*** (Nov)

## Coming Comics—Dark Horse in June

*Ron Marz & Bart Sears* make a trip back to the Hyborian Age for ***Conan: Island of No Return,*** a two-part limited series. On the run from a cadre of guards, Conan is aided by two sister thieves who just happen to be in need of a strong back to help them with an upcoming heist. The situation becomes more complicated, though, when both sisters set their sights on taking the barbarian as their own!

Dark Horse's relaunch of ***Dark Horse Presents*** continues with the 80-page second issue, featuring material by *Howard Chaykin, Richard Corben, Carla Speed McNeil, Paul Chadwick, David Chelsea, Michael T. Gilbert, Dave Gibbons, Geoff Darrow, Neal Adams,* and others.

Imagine a world of magic, full of elves and hobbits and dragons and orcs. Inside this world of magic and wonder there is a great war being waged, using warriors from human history as chess pieces in a bloody, endless battle. Welcome to the world of ***Drifters,*** a multi-volume manga miniseries by ***Hellsing*** creator *Kohta Hirano.*

*Adam Warren & Emily Warren* present the latest comic-book-sized ***Empowered*** tale in ***Empowered Special #2: Ten Questions for the Maidman.*** The badass, broom-swinging vigilante Maidman, the "cross-dressing crusader," is interviewed by the super-phony "celebricape" TV host of an ill-fated talk show. Meanwhile, costumed crimefighter Empowered exploits Maidman's fearsome reputation not only to victimize hapless supervillains, but also to get the upper hand on her recalcitrant boyfriend!

*The Guild* creator and star *Felicia Day* is joined by series director *Sean Becker* for ***The Guild: Bladezz,*** a new one-shot starring the Knights of Good's brash young rogue. This issue presents the secret origin of Bladezz's alter ego, the supernaturally gifted model Finn Smulders.

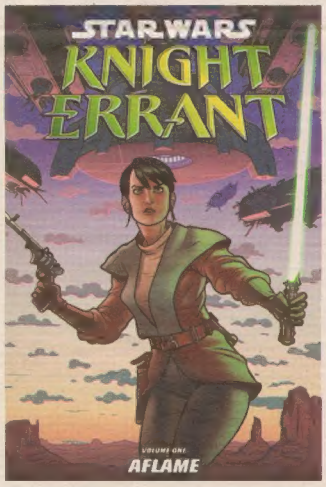
War ensues between the forces of good and evil as Hellboy finally confronts the Queen of Blood one on one in the three-part ***Hellboy: The Fury*** by *Mike Mignola & Duncan Fegredo,* setting the stage for a new chapter in Hellboy's life!

*Arvid Nelson, Andrea Mutti, & Pierluigi Baldassini* present a comic book prequel to the upcoming videogame ***Rage,*** from the developers of ***Doom*** and ***Quake,*** This three-part series reveals secrets central to the story of ***Rage.***

With the release of ***Star Wars: The Old Republic—The Lost Suns #1,*** LucasArts and BioWare's ***Star Wars: The Old Republic*** online game gets a fresh, new story set concurrent with the game, written by senior writer *Alexander Freed.* ***The Lost Suns #1*** introduces a new hero with a new mission. Theron Shan—descendant of the legendary bloodline that includes Jedi Bastila Shan and Satele Shan—is no Jedi he's a Republic spy! His mission: to discover the blackest secret at the heart of the evil Sith Empire!

Dark Horse collected editions (solicited for June, July, and August release) include:

- ***Archie Archives Volume 2 HC,*** collecting all the Archie material from ***Jackpot Comics #9, Pep Comics #s 39-45,*** and ***Archie Comics #s 3-6.***
- ***Billy the Kid's Old Timey Oddities & the Ghastly Fiend of London Volume 2 TP,*** collecting the four-issue miniseries as well as the Billy the Kid tale from the ***Buzzard*** miniseries.
- ***Boris Karloff Tales of Mystery Archives Volume 6 HC,*** collecting ***Boris Karloff Tales of Mystery #s 33-41.***
- ***BPRD: Hell on Earth Volume 1—New World TP,*** collecting ***BPRD Hell on Earth: New World #s 1-5*** and an eight-page story previously offered exclusively at Emerald City Comic Con.
- ***Flash Gordon Comic Book Archives Volume 4 HC,*** collecting Gold Key's ***Flash Gordon #s 19-27.***
- ***Little Lulu Volume 28: The Prize Winner & Other Stories TP,*** collecting ***Marge's Little Lulu & Tubby at Summer Camp*** and ***Marge's Little Lulu & Tubby Halloween Fun.***
- ***Space Family Robinson Archives Volume 1 HC,*** collecting Gold Key's ***Space Family Robinson #s 1-7*** by *Del Connell & Dan Spiegle.*
- ***Star Wars: Knight Errant—Aflame TP,*** collecting the five-part miniseries.
- ***Star Wars Omnibus: A Long Time Ago Volume 4 TP,*** collecting Marvel Comics' ***Star Wars #s 68-85*** and the adaptation of ***Return of the Jedi.***



Dark Horse continues its celebration of Charles Schulz's masterpiece, Peanuts, with limited-edition 8" flocked vinyl Snoopy figures in a rainbow of contemporary colors. Each color of the ***Snoopy 8" Vinyl Figures*** is produced in a limited run of 500 to 750. The black parts of Snoopy (ears, nose, etc.) will be unflocked black vinyl. The rest of him will be flocked in a pastel hue.

## CSNsider

- DC has announced new contents for ***Adventure Comics #s 525 & 526.*** Both will now feature two stories in each issue: a lead story featuring the Legion Academy by *Paul Levitz & Phil Jimenez,* and a backup story focusing on the Black Witch (#525) and the speedster XS (#526).
- ***Static Shock #1*** has been cancelled and will be resolicited at a later date.
- Orders for the trade paperback of *Peter Bagge's* ***Other Lives*** have been cancelled; the book will be resolicited at a later date.
- *Carlos Rodriguez* is the new artist on ***Namor, The First Mutant #9,*** replacing *Antonio Fuso.*
- For the first time in over forty years, Captain Action will be donning the costumes of Marvel heroes once again. Round 2 and Captain Action Enterprises have reached a licensing agreement whereby they will once again be able to offer costume sets of Spider-Man, Captain America, Iron Man, Thor, and other heroes designed to fit the 1/6 scale Captain Action figure. "We're thrilled to be able to offer Marvel character costume sets as part of our all-new Captain Action product line," Round 2 creative director *Tom Lowe* said. Look for the costumes beginning this holiday season.

## Back to Press

- ***Venom #1 2nd Printing*** (FEB118103), in stores 4/20.

**twitter.com/csnsider**

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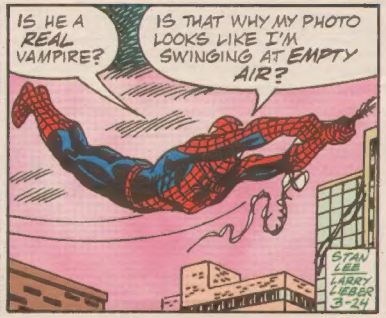


COMIC SHOP NEWS

20th ANNUAL RED K AWARDS

## The Readers Strike Back

*Back in December, we presented the 20th annual edition of our Red K Awards, a blending of commendations and criticism that points out some of the best and worst of the past year. At the end of that feature, we encouraged you, our readers, to send us your own Red K Awards for the best and worst of 2010—and that's just what you did! So let's take a look at what you had to say!*

*Some books generated diametrically opposed responses. For example, let's take a look at two Reader's Red K Awards for Grant Morrison's* ***Batman*** *storylines for 2010:*

### The "Taking Excellence for Grant-ed" Award

***Grant Morrison's Batman***

"After too many years of a somber, compulsive, grim Dark Knight, it's great to see *Grant Morrison* embrace Batman's multi-storied history and bring elements from the halcyon days of the 1950's and the 1960's into current continuity. No other writer has the comic book smarts to take such a diverse group of story elements, mix 'em all together, and actually make it work! Batman has never been better!"
—*Kenneth Ware*

### The "Denny O'Neil's Not Dead, But Wasn't That Just Him Turning In His Grave?" Award

***Grant Morrison's Batman***

"After thirty years of steady, ongoing character development and progress, Grant Morrison has now plunged Batman fully back to his nadir. Back beyond the 70's, beyond even the 60's, straight back to the day-glo, camp world, of the 1950's. Multiple Batmen running around Gotham, 'legitimate' time trips, a foreign club of Bat-look-a-likes, flying cars? What next? Will the Joker become a ten-foot alien? Will Batman get a masked dog? Will Bat-Mite, the 'for real' Bat-Mite, turn up? Don't laugh, it's probably already in the schedule. Whatever happened to our Dark Knight?"
—*Ray Battersby*

*All in all, we had 34 different reader responses that spotlighted Morrison's* ***Batman****—some loved it, some hated it, and some were still trying to figure out what it all meant!*

*The only other writer whose work generated almost as many responses was J. Michael Straczynski—and it wasn't his run on* ***Superman*** *that readers wrote about, so much as it was his decision not to finish that run. Every response was critical; here are two that are indicative of the sentiments expressed in the Reader Red K nominations.*

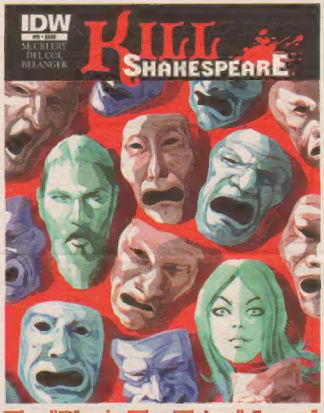
### The "Oops! He Did It Again" Award

***J. Michael Straczynski***

"...for leaving his readers high and dry when he cut short his twelve-issue run on ***Wonder Woman*** and ***Superman*** after only four issues of each title."
—*Steven King*

"Keep this guy away from shiny objects. JMS took over ***Brave and Bold***, and it's been on hiatus since May. Then he took over ***Superman*** and ***Wonder Woman*** in June, couldn't keep up the schedules, and now has already left both titles to do a sequel to his ***Superman: Earth One***. And now he says he's also working on the ninth issue of ***The Twelve***, his Marvel mini that's been on hiatus since 2008... I'm betting it'll be the year-*twenty* twelve before that happens."
—*Jim McNichols*

*And now, here are some of the highlights from you, our readers:*




### The "Play's The Thing" Award

***Kill Shakespeare***

"As an actor and long time comic reader, I'm always looking for ways to combine my two loves. This terrific series shows that the Bard's Characters and concepts are truly immortal!"
—*Tony Bowers*

### The "Signal to Noise" Award

***2010's manga offerings***

"Want proof that all the good manga have already been published in the US? Just take a look at the lame new manga series that readers were stuck with in 2010!..."
—*Courtney Melanson*

### The "Price Matters Not" Award

***Superman: Earth One***

"Here everyone is worrying about whether the comic book industry can support a $3.99 comic, and this $20 original graphic novel outsold every ***Superman*** title released at any pricepoint in the same month. I guess that, if the story is good enough, price isn't that big a deal after all. Maybe publishers should worry less about making comics cheaper or more expensive and just try to make them *better*."
—*Matthew Corlew*

### The "Warren Piece" Award

***Famous Monsters of Filmland***

"I thought that we were pretty lucky when Dark Horse brought back ***Creepy*** last year—but when I saw that IDW was bringing back the classic ***Famous Monsters of Filmland***, I couldn't have been happier! And the revived magazine is every bit as good as Forry's original!"
—*Elliot Blanton*

### The "Severance Package" Award

***Marvel series finales***

"Once upon a time, low-selling books would just get canceled, fanatical fanbases and critical raves be damned. The end. This year, however, Marvel has altered this trend by allowing beloved titles that were on their way out a final bow; giving axed titles ***Nova, Guardians of the Galaxy, The Incredible Hercules***, and ***Hawkeye & Mockingbird*** one (and sometimes more than one) epic miniseries to send the titles off in a blaze of glory. "If only this tactic was in use when ***NextWave*** bit the dust!"
-*Dan H. Goldstein*

### The "Would You Kato Explain?" Award

***Dynamite's Green Hornet Titles***

"Okay, so if ***Green Hornet: Year One*** is set in the 1930's, ***Green Hornet*** is set in the present and "***Green Hornet Strikes*** is set in the near future, *and* they are the stories of the *same* characters, someone explain how it is that Kato is still spry at over 100 years old *with* a daughter in her mid twenties . . . alternate universes, anyone?"
—*Vinny Bellizia*

### The "Looking for a Ray of Sunshine" Award

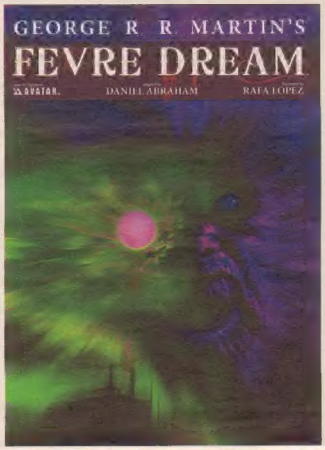
***Bluewater's Ray Harryhausen Presents line***

"It looks like Bluewater's line of comic book miniseries inspired by classic *Ray Harryhausen* films has come to an end. Too bad—a fantasy/sf legend like Harryhausen is always a worthwhile addition to comics!"
—*Luis Aguilar*

### The "Write It Out" Award

***Ian Edginton's Victorian Undead***

"'Sherlock Holmes fights zombies.' From these uninspiring words came one of the best comic books of the year. And why was this? Because its writer, *Ian Edginton*, actually thought the story through, played with its implications, made the characters believable—and on top of everything else, made Moriarty the villain without shoehorning him in. Now if only other writers showed this much care with their own work..."
—*Jordan Simmons*




### The "About Bloody Time!" Award

***Fevre Dream***

"They've adapted everything from *Anne Rice* to *Laurell K. Hamilton* to comics, but it took over two decades to Adapt *George R.R.* Martin's seminal vampire novel? C'mon, *really*?"
—*Tony Bowers*

### The "Vampires Suck!" Award

***Vampires in superhero comics***

"What's with these vampires? Marvel screws up X-Men with a lame vampire story, then they pollute the Ultimate Universe with more of the same. Heck, they even give us Blade, a character who has no place in the Marvel Universe. Why did they end a perfectly good vampire moratorium after only 25 years?..."
—*Stan Kaufman*

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### The "Savage Man of the Year" Award

*Robert E. Howard's Cormac FitzGeoffrey*

"Conan, Kull, and Solomon Kane wielded swords of destruction at Dark Horse and Red Sonja cut a bloody swath in a number of Dynamite titles, but no one captured the soul of Howard like Cormac did when he hurled an axe across a moat to split the head of a traitorous prince. Crom, that's a man to drink to!"

—*Martin Harnick*

### The "Third Time's A Charm" Award

*Dark Horse Comics' Gold Key hero relaunches*

M"any comic book characters have seen many different publishers, but few have seen the positive response that Dark Horse has with the return of some classic Gold Key titles. ***Magnus Robot Fighter, Solar, Man of the Atom,*** and ***Turok Son of Stone*** had a second life with Valiant Comics, but with the crash of the comic market in the early 90s, these heroes took a second retirement. That is, until Dark Horse acquired the properties and has now started releasing new stories. Old and new fans are sure to be treated to the story-telling of comics of yesteryear. Welcome back, old friends!"

—*Brian Stelle*

### The "Kane It Be?" Award

*Kate Kane and Martha Kane*

"By revealing Martha Wayne's maiden name to be Kane, DC opens up the potential for a true "Bat Family" gathering amongst Kate, Bruce and Bette. Who says Clark can be the only superhero with a cousin in the family business?!"

—*Vincent Bellizia*

### The "No Case to Cut Showcase" Award

*DC's Showcase cutback*

"Hey, DC, bring back those two-a-month ***Showcase*** collections! It was a great way for readers like me who weren't around for the Silver and Bronze Ages to catch up on some classic comics without spending a small fortune. I loved it that they were offering one superhero and one non-superhero book each month... I was hoping we'd see a great collection of DC's romance books and ***Sugar and Spike*** as a part of the line..."

—*Denise McGaffney*

### The "It's a Smallville World After All" Award

*Smallville and DC's Superman books*

"Why are all the Superman titles so lame compared to CW's ***Smallville***, which would have been the best story arc in DC history if it had appeared in the comic books? DC should make this required watching for anyone who wants to write Superman..."

—*Patricia Stinson*

### The "Back to the Drawing Board" Award

*Mike Mignola*

"Don't get me wrong—I enjoy Mike's writing as mucha s the next guy. But it's about time he got back to drawing the art as well! I would love to see ***Hellboy*** by his original creator again!"

—*Tony Bowers*

*(And it appears that you will, early next year—Cliff)*

### The "Out of the Shadows" Award

*The Shadow*

"Where is the greatest pulp hero of them all? I was sure that the Shadow would come back once DC re-started Doc Savage and the Avenger, but if he's returned, he's stayed in the shadows so well that none of us have noticed!"

—*Kelly Crowe*

### "The Bucks Stop Here" Award

*Archie: The Married Life*

"The superhero publishers argue whether we should be paying $2.99 or $3.99 for 22 pages of content, and here's Archie giving readers 64 or more pages of original material in full color every month for less than four bucks—and the stories are even better than most of the superhero comics. If they can make this work, why can't Marvel and DC?"

—*Chris Nelson*

### The "Un-Conventional" Award

*Publishers who produce "convention-only" exclusive books or collectibles*

"I've never been to a convention, and don't really want to go, but I regularly buy your comic books every week at my local comic shop. So why is it that you reward convention goers with special comics that aren't available to people like me, who buy all your books and keep you in business?"

—*Barry Nealey*

### The "Empty Garden" Award

*Pushing Daisies Comics*

"Shortly after this brilliant television series came to an early end, series creator *Bryan Fuller* said that a ***Pushing Daisies*** comic was in the works. Well, it's been almost two years and there's no sign of the comic. I really wish creators would quit jerking us around with hot air and empty promises and actually start doing some *writing*!"

—*Carly McMichaels*

### The "Image Untied" Award

*Image United*

"Gee, who would have suspected that the never-miss-a-deadline Image creators would fail to get ***Image United*** out on time? I'm shocked, I tell you—*shocked!*"

—*Amit Sanjay*

### The "21st Century Schizoid Man" Award

*Wolverine*

"He's an out of control brutal killer. No, wait, he's in hell. No, wait, he's a team player struggling to save the world. No, wait, he's celebrating a birthday. No,wait... Either there's a whole lab filled with Wolverine clones, or Marvel has thrown continuity out the window to over-market this character. Either way, I'm bored. Howsabout a story where Wolverine dies for a year or two... and *stays dead?*"

—*Gerry Leister*

*And there you have the best and worst of 2010 according to our readers. Thanks to all of you who submitted your own nominations, and I wish we had room to offer something from everyone (you might be surprised to learn how many comics or creators were spotlighted in five or ten different Red X submissions, so some of the awards that made the cut actually represent the sentiments of many other readers as well). And look for us in late December, when we'll do it all over again for 2011!*

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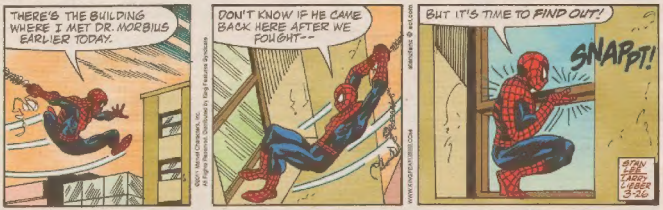
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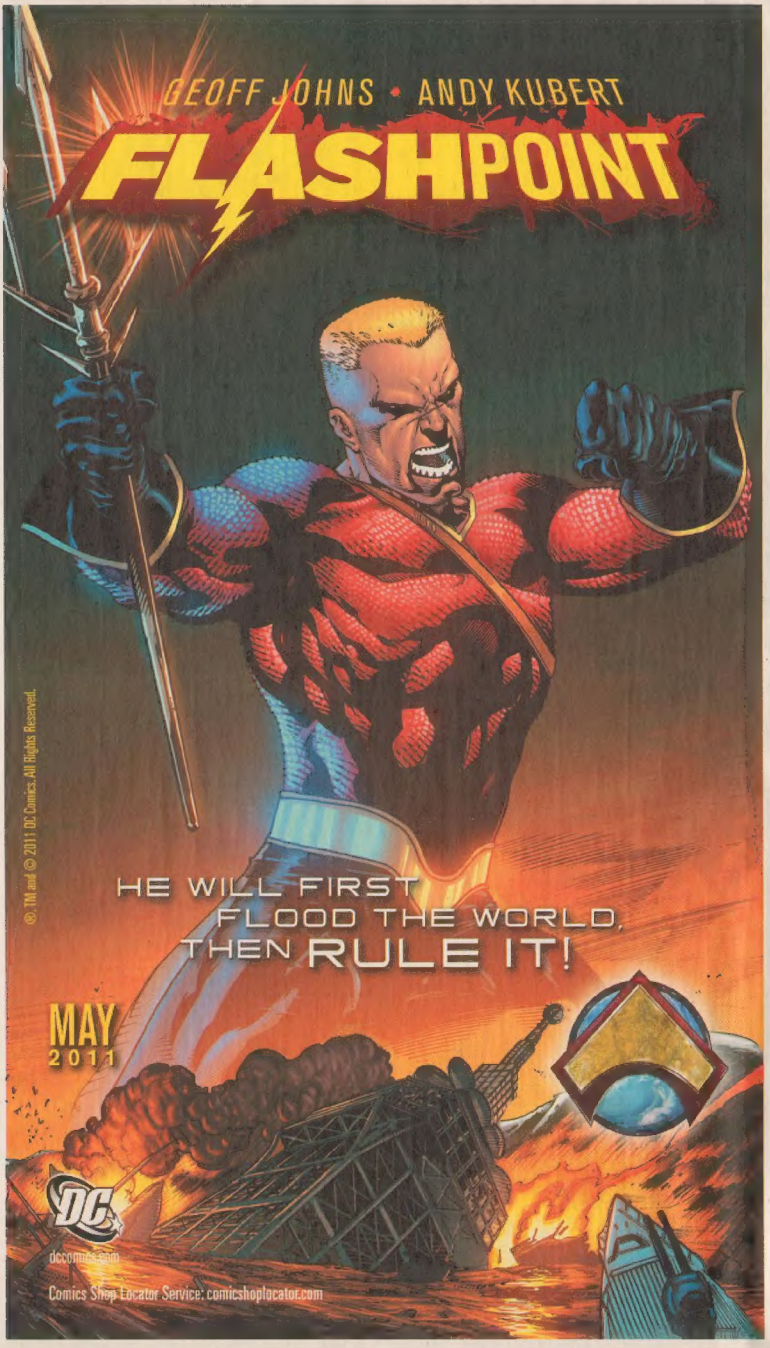

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